

# UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

## ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

---

#### 1.0 Preamble

The Animal Care Committee (ACC) at the University of Waterloo is a constituted committee of the Senate Graduate and Research Council, and reports directly to the Vice President, Research and International, as the senior administrator for the animal care program. The ACC operates to fulfil the University's legal and ethical responsibilities concerning the use of live, non-human vertebrate animals (hereafter referred to as animals) in research and teaching. The ACC is also empowered to ensure that the quality and operation of the University of Waterloo's animal housing facilities, and the care and use of animals in research and teaching are in accordance with national, provincial, and institutional guidelines and regulations. The guidelines are those established by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and by the University of Waterloo; the regulations are those under the Province of Ontario Animals for Research Act. Other professional and ethical codes and guidelines are consulted as needed.

The jurisdiction of the ACC extends to all teaching and research activities involving live non-human vertebrate animals conducted on or off-campus by University of Waterloo faculty, post-doctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students and staff.

#### 2.0 Membership of the Animal Care Committee (ACC)

The ACC shall consist of a minimum of 16 voting members:

- Five faculty members including:
  - one member with expertise in mammalian research
  - one member with expertise in avian research
  - one member with expertise in field research using animals
  - one member with expertise in aquatic and/or amphibian research
  - one member with expertise in statistical methodologies
  - members may represent more than one area of expertise
- An institutional staff or faculty member who does not conduct research with animals
- Two persons who represent the interests and concerns of the community and have no affiliation with the institution (i.e., community members)
- A Veterinarian preferably with training and experience in laboratory animal medicine
- Two graduate students who have current or prior animal research experience and/or experience as a teaching assistant in animal laboratories
- Animal Health Technician(s) (ex-officio)
- Senior Manager, Animal Research and Teaching Facilities (ex-officio)
- Director, Office of Research Ethics (ex-officio)
- Safety Officer, Safety Office (ex-officio)
- Research Ethics Advisor (ex-officio) (non-voting)

The ACC must reflect gender diversity, including at minimum both men and women.

\*The ACC may seek the confidential opinion or advice of an ad hoc advisor/reviewer from among University of Waterloo faculty or from a confidential external consultant on a particular field research application or working on Indigenous land to ensure it has the necessary background information and knowledge to review the ethical acceptability of the application. Instructors or lecturers whose courses involve use of animals may be

asked for ad-hoc input into applications relating to the use of animals in the classroom at the discretion of the ACC Chair; other persons may be consulted as required.

### **3.0 Terms of Office of the Animal Care Committee**

- 3.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Animal Care Committee (ACC) is appointed by the Vice-President, Research and International, in consultation with the Director, Office of Research Ethics (ORE) from among the members of the Committee. The Chair and Vice Chair will be selected from among the membership of the ACC by the Vice-President Research and International. The Chair will have a minimum of one term's prior experience as a member of the ACC.
- 3.2 The role of the Chair is to be accountable for the overall operation of the ACC and the compliance component of the University of Waterloo animal care program. The Vice Chair may discharge the responsibilities of the Chair when the Chair is unable to do so, discharge responsibilities assigned by the Chair, and assist in the overall operation of the ACC and the compliance component of the University of Waterloo animal care program, as requested.
- 3.3 The members of the Committee (except ex-officio) are appointed by the Vice-President, Research and International on the recommendation of the Director, ORE, and the respective Faculty Deans.
- 3.4 Each member of the Committee will serve for a three-year term. This term normally is renewed once. The exceptions to this are the Director, ORE; the Veterinarian; the Research Ethics Advisor; the Animal Health Technicians, and the Senior Manager, Animal Research and Teaching Facilities, all of whom serve for indefinite terms.
- 3.5 The Research Ethics Advisor, on behalf of the Director, ORE, shall serve as Secretary to the Committee.
- 3.6 All members of the Committee are full voting members (except the Research Ethics Advisor).

### **4.0 Frequency of Meetings of the Animal Care Committee**

- 4.1 The Committee normally will meet eleven times per year. Additional meetings may be called, as necessary.
- 4.2 For the meeting to proceed, a quorum (i.e., 50% of the membership plus one) must be present. The quorum shall include the Veterinarian and one community member.
- 4.3 Detailed Minutes of each meeting will be taken outlining Committee discussions, decisions, and recommendations for revisions with respect to each protocol under review as well as procedural and other issues related to the care and use of animals at the University of Waterloo. Decisions are reached using a consensus model. A copy of the minutes is uploaded and available at the next meeting. A copy will also be provided to the Vice-President, Research and International upon request.
- 4.4 In addition to meetings, members of the Committee will conduct, at least annually, one site visit to each of the animal facilities. The Director, ORE, either independently or with the Veterinarian, the veterinary inspector from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, or a subset of the Committee will conduct site visits to each facility on a more regular basis. The observations from every inspection tour, together with any

recommendations and/or commendations, will be discussed at the subsequent Committee meeting and included in the minutes. A report will be provided to the administration of each animal facility as required.

## **5.0 Responsibilities and Duties of the Animal Care Committee**

The ACC has responsibilities in the following areas:

### *5.1 Ethics Review Mandate*

- 5.1.1 All research or teaching activities involving animals may not begin, or animals may not be acquired, without prior ethics review and approval of a written animal use protocol. The content of the animal use protocol must comply with that recommended by the CCAC. The ethics review and approval process, which is conducted by the Committee, ensures that all protocols comply with the requirements of the CCAC, the Animals for Research Act and the University of Waterloo Guidelines for the Care and Use of Animals in Research and Teaching.
- 5.1.2 Procedures will be established for the submission, consideration, approval or disapproval of animal research and teaching protocols.
- 5.1.3 All research and teaching projects involving animals will be reviewed to determine that the proposed procedures are in accord with relevant legislation and guidelines and that complete, accurate and current records of the protocols and review process will be kept. The decision of the ACC, and any required revisions, will be communicated in writing to the respective researchers and a follow up mechanism will be identified to ensure that the required revisions are received.
- 5.1.4 All amendments to approved protocols will be reviewed and approved and complete, accurate and current records of the amendments and the review process will be kept. Review of amendments is normally done by a sub-committee comprised of the ACC Chair; the Director, ORE; the Veterinarian, Animal Health Technicians, Senior Manager, Animal Research and Teaching Facilities, Research Ethics Advisor (non-voting) and one community member. Details related to these amendments are presented to the full Committee at the next meeting and included in the minutes.
- 5.1.5 All approved protocols will be reviewed and approved on an annual basis and complete, accurate and current records of renewals and the review process will be kept. Annual review of renewal protocols is normally done by a sub-committee comprised of the ACC, Chair; the Director, ORE; one community member; Animal Health Technicians; Senior Manager, Animal Research and Teaching Facilities, and the Veterinarian at a meeting immediately prior to the monthly ACC meeting. A verbal report is provided to the ACC and included in the minutes of the meeting.
- 5.1.6 A new animal use protocol must be submitted for all ongoing research after three consecutive annual renewal protocols.
- 5.1.7 Once approved an animal use protocol will be monitored throughout its life by an active post approval monitoring process as outlined in the ACC standard operating procedure titled Post-approval Monitoring of Ongoing Research Involving Animals.

### *5.2 Scientific and Educational Merit Review Mandate*

- 5.2.1 All protocols involving the use of live, non-human vertebrate animals will undergo peer review for scientific or educational merit prior to undergoing ethics review and approval through the ACC.
- 5.2.2 All non-funded and non-externally peer-reviewed research projects involving live, non-human vertebrate animals will undergo prior review for scientific merit as per 5.2.1. This includes pilot research and contract or grant research. Protocols that are grant funded and undergo scientific merit review as part of the peer review process established by the granting/funding agency, are not required to undergo additional scientific merit review.
- 5.2.3 Projects conducted as undergraduate or graduate level course or laboratory assignments must undergo prior review for educational merit.
- 5.2.4 The ACC itself does not conduct either scientific or educational merit review for non-funded, non-externally reviewed projects. However, the ACC is responsible for ensuring that information about the requirements for scientific or educational merit review is communicated to researchers.
- 5.2.5 The Vice President, Research and International is responsible for ensuring that a process is established to assure that research for which animals will be used has been independently reviewed by expert peers and for ensuring that:
- Peer reviewers are identified for each project that has not already been peer reviewed
  - Any concerns raised by the reviews are addressed before scientific or educational merit is confirmed and the application submitted for ACC review.
- 5.2.6 The scientific or educational merit review process(es) will be conducted prior to the ethics review process and an Assessment of Scientific or Educational Merit on Animal Research will be completed, signed and uploaded appended to the ethics review application to which it refers.
- 5.3 *Animal Welfare Mandate*
- 5.3.1 Any objectionable procedure considered to result in an animal experiencing unnecessary distress or pain will be stopped by the Veterinarian on behalf of the ACC.
- 5.3.2 Any use of animals for purposes other than those already approved, or use of non-approved procedures will be stopped by the Veterinarian on behalf of the ACC.
- 5.3.3 Any animal that is in pain or distress that cannot be alleviated will be humanely euthanized by the Veterinarian or an Animal Health Technician on behalf of the Veterinarian.
- 5.3.4 Adequate veterinary care is provided to all animals regardless of the stage in lifespan, and that access to veterinary care is available in cases of injury, illness, or surgery.
- 5.3.5 Animal health technicians will work collaboratively with the ACC to ensure animal welfare is maintained and to ensure adherence to institutional and ACC policies.
- 5.3.6 A set of standard operating procedures will be developed, and reviewed on a regular basis, for animal husbandry, facility and equipment management, alleviation for pain or distress, proper and effective use of anaesthesia and analgesia, pre-and post-operative care and monitoring, procedures for euthanasia, and other topics as required.

- 5.3.7 A copy of the standard operating procedures will be available to Animal Health Technicians, animal researchers, and course instructors and these procedures will be implemented and regularly reviewed.
- 5.3.8 A crisis management program is in place for the animal facilities and the animal care and use program, in conjunction with the institution's crisis management plan.
- 5.4 *Animal Care Facility Mandate*
- 5.4.1 The ACC Chair and Veterinarian will have full access to all of the animal facilities at any time.
- 5.4.2 The ACC will ensure animals are housed or maintained only in areas that have been inspected and approved for this purpose.
- 5.4.3 All animal facilities are inspected by the ACC on an annual basis at a minimum, to ensure that the facilities and animal care provided within meet provincial and federal standards.
- 5.4.4 The level of security in the animal facilities is adequate for the protection of the animals housed therein and personnel working with animals, and this is reviewed on a regular basis.
- 5.4.5 Reports and recommendations regarding necessary development/improvements, maintenance and use of the animal facilities are provided to departmental administration which oversees each facility.
- 5.5 *Education Mandate*
- 5.5.1 The ACC will ensure on-going educational programs consistent with the CCAC *guidelines on: institutional animal user training* are provided for all personnel who will handle animals (i.e., principal investigators, course instructors, post doctoral fellows, research and technical staff, graduate and undergraduate students) on issues related to the proper care and use of animals in teaching and research, including but not limited to, the ethics of animal experimentation, species-appropriate anaesthesia and analgesia, aseptic surgical techniques, establishment of humane endpoints, surgical monitoring, species-appropriate euthanasia methods and legislation applicable to laboratory use and care.
- 5.5.2 All personnel (i.e., principal investigators, course instructors, post doctoral fellows, research and technical staff, graduate, and undergraduate students) engaged in the care or maintenance of animals will be adequately trained and qualified and encouraged to attend in-house or external continuing education opportunities as appropriate.
- 5.5.3 The ACC will liaise with the academic community to ensure researchers and instructors receive current information pertaining to provincial regulations and federal guidelines as well as current institutional policies and practices.
- 5.5.4 The ACC will work with and make recommendations as needed to appropriate committees within the institution (a) information can be provided to the general public on matters concerning animal welfare and research and teaching activities involving animals at the institution. (b) ensure the safety and security of both the animals and personnel working with the animals.

- 5.5.5 The ACC will encourage the use of alternatives to animals in teaching and research activities wherever possible.

## **6.0 General**

- 6.1 The Animal Use Data Form is accurately completed and submitted on an annual basis and by the required date to the CCA.

## **7.0 Reconsideration and Appeal Mechanisms Associated with the Animal Care Committee's Decisions**

### *7.1 Reconsideration or Informal Appeal*

A researcher or instructor who is in disagreement with the ethics review feedback and/or decision of the ACC on his/her research project/program involving use of live, non-human vertebrate animals may request reconsideration of this decision in writing to the ACC. The reconsideration request with any additional supporting documents will be sent to the Director, ORE, who will bring this to the attention of other members of the ACC for discussion at the meeting immediately following receipt of the reconsideration request. The ACC will review the written document and any additional supporting materials provided by the researcher. An informal meeting may be called between the ACC and the researcher or instructor to further discuss the matter. Following consideration of all additional information, the ACC will reach a decision as to whether the additional information/explanation provided by the researcher will result in a change in the ACC's decision. Every attempt will be made by the ACC in consultation with the researcher to reach a resolution by informal means.

### *7.2 Formal Appeal*

If a resolution of the matter has not been reached through the reconsideration process, the researcher or instructor will refer the matter to the Vice-President, Research and International, for opinion and decision. The Vice-President, Research International, will review documentation provided by the ACC and the researcher, and will consult with others as required, including but not limited to, members of the ACC, the Researcher or instructor, and the CCAC. Subsequently, the Vice-President, Research and International, will issue a decision on the matter in writing with copies to the researcher or instructor and ACC. This decision will be final.

Vice-President, Research and International; Approved April 2021  
Animal Care Committee, Reviewed July 2022